

SURGERY OF TRAUMA. Edited by Warner F. Bowers, Colonel, M.C., U.S.A., formerly Chief Surgical Consultant, Office of the Surgeon-General. (Pp. xxv + 605; figs. 284. 120s.) London : Lippincott, 1953.

In two world wars the American surgeons have entered the field with enthusiasm but with little experience. At first they have shown themselves to suffer from a failure of transfer from civilian practice to the stress and urgency of war. This stress and urgency is not so continuous that it does not allow time for thought and learning, and it is at this that the American surgeons have excelled in both these conflicts.

In the Second World War they arrived in many theatres of action unprepared surgically for what they were going to find, but with commendable rapidity they adjusted themselves to the new conditions and learnt, and recorded their learning in a very admirable way. This process is shown excellently in this volume of the *Surgery of Trauma*, which is produced by over forty authorities working in many various zones of action. Contributions are given by those who worked in Europe, both in the Northern Force and also in the Mediterranean. There are numerous reports from the Pacific and the Far East, and finally, there is the experience more recently gained in Korea. All these have been most admirably brought together under the editorship of Colonel Bowers. The book consists of four sections; the first one is on the physiological aspects of the management of trauma and contains several articles on the basic concepts of the pathology and surgery of trauma. On the whole, more emphasis is given to the morbid anatomy and morbid physiology than to detailed instructions for treatment, or even to known results of treatment during the recent war. Articles such as those on anærobic cellulitis and clostridial myositis are given in general terms and not supported by figures. True it is that figures are very difficult to be sure of even in peace time, and in war even more so, but no attempt has been made to assess the changing prognosis that the antibiotics produced.

The next section is on regional wound surgery, and is contributed by some men of quite outstanding experience and powers of expression. All the sections are clear and good, and it would be difficult to single out any for special mention. The section, however, on peripheral nerves by Barnes Woodall is a most authoritative and careful article. Unfortunately it is not supported by the beautiful illustrations which have delighted us in his other publications on the subject. Zollinger and Firak's article on the abdominal wound is, unfortunately, very short, but what there is of it is well done. The short article by Gray on chest wounds deals with the basic principles in a very succinct and helpful way. On fractures occurring in war wounds again there are short and undetailed accounts; and the opportunity is not adequately taken to describe at length the peculiar wounds of the hand produced by explosion. In all this section on regional wound surgery, while admiring the clear and precise way the information is arranged, one is somewhat disappointed to find that the articles do not contain any clear and crisp account of how a wound should be treated in such a way that it would be easy for future generations to refer for information and instruction to these pages.

Section 3 on the military consideration in wound management is a mixture of clear instructions and discussion of the basic principles underlying them.

Colonel Bowers and his team have done posterity a service which we hope posterity will be saved from the necessity of using by the courageous, wise and open-hearted activities of the post-war America.

H. W. R.

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